

**Prepared Remarks of FCC Chairman Julius Genachowski**

**Minority Media and Telecom Council  
Access to Capital and Telecommunications Conference**

**Washington, D.C.  
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Thank you, Henry, for that introduction, and thank you MMTC for welcoming me and for hosting this event.

Thank you to David Honig for your work and for organizing this important event. I heard that yesterday you gave the National Broadband Plan an “A” – thank you for that.

Also, thanks to the Renaissance for cranking up the AC. I’ve called broadband the most significant technological advancement of the modern age, but, this summer, you could definitely make a case for air conditioning.

I’m happy join you today at this important conference.

The issues we have gathered to discuss – promoting equal opportunity, driving private sector investment, fostering an environment where new and emerging businesses can thrive – are vitally important to our nation’s future.

These are the very issues on which we are focused at the FCC, and I am confident that through conferences like these, and through hard work and collaboration, we can seize the incredible opportunities that exist in the telecommunications world.

When it comes to the conference’s overarching goals of promoting equality and economic opportunity in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, few things will do more to advance those goals than implementation of our National Broadband Plan.

Broadband is the indispensable infrastructure of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

It is a platform for economic opportunity.

Multiple studies tell us the same thing – even modest increases in broadband adoption can yield hundreds of thousands of new jobs.

Many of you are entrepreneurs. You understand why. Broadband allows new businesses to start, and small business to think big and grow bigger.

With a high-speed Internet connection and the emergence of cloud computing, every small business can have access to a world-class IT system and a national, indeed, global marketplace—as long as we tackle the barriers to broadband adoption by small businesses.

Broadband is also a platform for solutions to major challenges, such as education, health care, energy, and public safety. E-Readers for students who have out-of-date textbooks; remote diagnostics for patients without access to specialists—these are extraordinary opportunities that we must seize.

Broadband is also a platform for 21<sup>st</sup> century citizen engagement, and for improving government efficiency and effectiveness.

As you know, the U.S. is not where we need to be when it comes to broadband – especially for historically marginalized communities.

You already know the numbers: Only 59% of African Americans have broadband at home—lower than the national average. For Hispanics, it's 49 percent. For Native Americans, we don't even have the data, but penetration is estimated at around 10%.

The digital divide is seriously troubling. More troubling now than in the past, because the costs of digital exclusion are rising.

For example, classifieds are moving online, job applications must be submitted online, and more and more jobs require digital skills. Increasingly, if you don't have broadband, you can't get a job.

At one time, not having broadband may have been an inconvenience. Now, it is essential to opportunity in 21<sup>st</sup> century America.

That's why Congress and the President directed the FCC to develop a National Broadband Plan.

The Plan lays out an ambitious strategy to promote private investment and build a world-class broadband infrastructure that unleashes innovation and brings the benefits of high-speed Internet to all Americans.

Achieving the Plan's goals will drive economic success, global competitiveness, a 21<sup>st</sup> century democracy, and solutions to national challenges like health and education.

So what do we propose?

Let's start with infrastructure deployment.

Many of you have argued that driving private investment in broadband networks is vitally important to our nation. I couldn't agree more.

The plan calls for the removal of barriers and the reallocation of government resources to spur investment in both wired and wireless networks.

We are moving on this—for example, by cutting red tape to increase the speed of tower-siting.

And consider wireless. A recent Pew survey found that mobile devices are the primary pathway to the Internet for minority Americans. Without more spectrum, the first choice of Internet access for millions of minority Americans will deliver second-rate service.

The plan calls for the reallocation of 500 Megahertz of spectrum, so that we have a mobile infrastructure that leads the world in speed, service, and innovation.

Of course, the President recently endorsed this proposal and launched the administration's Wireless Broadband Initiative to free up spectrum and drive U.S. global leadership in mobile.

The Plan also proposes modernizing our Universal Service Fund from supporting yesterday's telephone service to tomorrow's broadband access service. This will provide resources for the deployment of broadband to locations where there is no private sector business case for investment.

Last week, we tackled broadband and health care, moving to extend connectivity in a significant way to clinics and hospitals that now have no or inadequate service. We must tackle the digital health divide.

Those proposals will help drive broadband deployment. Now how do we increase broadband adoption?

A significant barrier to broadband adoption among minority communities is cost. And so we propose transforming our Lifeline and Linkup programs to apply to broadband.

Another barrier to adoption is digital literacy. The Plan proposes establishing a Digital Literacy Corps to make sure all Americans have the skills they need to be active participants in 21st century society.

Many of you are entrepreneurs. What's in the Plan for small businesses?

We want to help small businesses improve their digital skills, too. The FCC is working with SBA to create public/private partnerships to improve broadband education and training for small and diverse businesses.

In addition, entrepreneurs shouldn't have to ask permission to innovate online. We are committed to preserving internet freedom and openness so small business owners have the freedom to connect, create and communicate online.

Even as we continue to pursue opportunity for new entrants in traditional media, it's essential that we seize the extraordinary opportunity of new media for diverse and independent voices and businesses.

To help small businesses, the FCC has also made it a priority to revitalize our Office of Communications Business Opportunities. First, we brought in a new Head of OCBO, Tom Reed, who has a remarkable background and has brought new energy and focus to OCBO.

The Office is currently working to make the best intelligence on capitalization strategies for new businesses available at a one-stop shop on the Web.

OCBO is also working on another networking initiative to connect small businesses with larger communications companies to facilitate business opportunities.

And I've directed OCBO to continue to set up "speed-dating" opportunities to connect diverse new entrants directly to investors, increasing access to capital.

To sum up what the whole broadband plan is about, I'd like to close with a brief story.

Earlier this year, I met a man in the Bronx named Irvin Aviles. Irvin lost his job at age 47. He had no computer experience. But he got information technology training through a local nonprofit called Per Scholas and, as a result, today he works in the Technical Operations Department at Time Warner Cable.

He said that, to him, broadband means "broad opportunity."

We need to make "broad opportunity" available to every U.S. citizen. The National Broadband Plan puts us on the path to achieve this goal, but we'll need your help to get where we need to go.

I look forward to working with you to seize the opportunities of broadband and bring the benefits of broadband to all Americans.

Thank you.